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ACTION NODS-00

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(NODS) W

-----303527 072030Z /66

O 071935Z OCT 83 ZFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6586
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
INFO WHITEHOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

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~~SECRET~~ SECTION 01 OF 03 TEL AVIV 13770

NODIS

FOR AMBASSADORS EYES ONLY

BEIRUT FOR AMBASSADOR MCFARLANE

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: FREL, PGOV, MOPS, MARR, LE, US, IS, SY, SA
SUBJECT: MCFARLANE/FAIRBANKS MISSION: THINKING
ABOUT WHAT'S NEXT

REF: BEIRUT 11096

1. SECRET - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. IN THINKING ABOUT NEXT STEPS IN LEBANON, WE OFFER
THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS ON VARIOUS POINTS RAISED BY
AMBASSADOR MCFARLANE IN REFTEL.

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION PROCESS

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3. IT IS IMPORTANT, AS AMBASSADOR MCFARLANE POINTED OUT THAT THE LEBANESE TAKE THE LEADING ROLE IN THE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION PROCESS. MOREOVER, IF THIS COURSE IS TO GET OFF GROUND AND IS TO BE SUCCESSFULLY NAVIGATED OVER THE COMING WEEKS AND MONTHS, WE BELIEVE THE U.S. WILL HAVE TO BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED BEHIND THE SCENES, PROVIDING COUNSEL AND ADVICE, AND DEFINING AT CRITICAL POINTS ALONG THE WAY THE OUTER LIMITS OF WHAT WE WOULD CONSIDER TO BE AN ACCEPTABLE POLITICAL OUTCOME. OTHERWISE, THE GEMAYEL GOVERNMENT WILL BE RUDDERLESS AND MAY SUCCEED TO PRESSURES WHICH ARE AT VARIANCE WITH OUR LONG-TERM INTERESTS, INCLUDING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, ADVERSELY AFFECTING THE PROSPECT OF ACHIEVING FURTHER ISRAELI WITHDRAWALS FROM LEBANON AND ALL THAT THAT IMPLIES FOR THE EFFECTIVE LONG-TERM PARTITIONING OF LEBANON.

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-- NATIONAL RECONCILIATION PER SE WOULD NOT NECESSARILY BE AN UNALLOYED BLESSING, EITHER FOR THE U.S. OR FOR ISRAEL, IF IT WERE TO PRODUCE AN OUTCOME WHICH PUT SYRIA FIRMLY IN THE LEBANESE DRIVER'S SEAT. WITHOUT OUR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE PROCESS, IT COULD RESULT IN ACCEPTANCE OF THE LOWEST COMMON DENOMINATOR -- NATIONAL UNITY AGAINST ISRAEL AND/OR SYRIAN DOMINATION OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT -- PUSHING LEBANON TOWARD THE RADICAL ARAB STATES AND POSSIBLY OPENING THE WAY FOR A RENEWED RADICAL PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN SOUTH LEBANON.

-- IN THIS CONTEXT, THE MAY 17 LEBANON-ISRAEL AGREEMENT WILL BE ESPECIALLY SIGNIFICANT. ITS FATE WILL BE PERCEIVED BY ISRAEL AS THE BAROMETER OF EFFECTIVE SYRIAN INFLUENCE OVER LEBANON. WHILE IT APPEARS HIGHLY UNLIKELY AT THIS POINT THAT THE AGREEMENT ITSELF WILL BE IMPLE-

MENTED, THERE WOULD BE FAR-REACHING, NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES IF IT WERE TO BE FORMALLY ABROGATED BY THE GOL. OUR

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MINIMUM GOAL THEREFORE MUST BE TO KEEP THE AGREEMENT
AT LEAST ON THE SHELF, OFFERING THE POSSIBILITY OVER
THE LONGER TERM THAT PARTS, IF NOT ALL, OF THE AGREEMENT
MAY BE CARRIED OUT IN A DE FACTO WAY.

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SEPARATE TRACK

4. THE ISRAELIS CONTINUALLY ADVANCE THE PROPOSITION
THAT LEBANON, ISRAEL, AND THE UNITED STATES SHOULD
COORDINATE THEIR ACTIONS, ESPECIALLY IN DEVELOPING
RELATIONS AND SEPARATE DEALS RESPECTIVELY BETWEEN THE
GOL AND THE DRUZE AND SHIIA COMMUNITIES. THEY POINT
OUT THAT THE SYRIANS DO NOT BY ANY MEANS HAVE ALL OF
THE INDIGENOUS ASSETS IN THEIR HANDS, AND THIS NEEDS TO
BE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF. WHILE GIVING HIGHEST PRIORITY
TO THE DRUZE CONNECTION AT THIS POINT, THE ISRAELIS
NOTE THAT A MAJORITY OF THE SHIIA LIVE IN THE ISRAELI
ZONE, AND THEY ARE ACTIVELY ATTEMPTING TO ESTABLISH
CLOSER TIES TO THEM. THEY LAMENT, HOWEVER, THAT THEY
DO NOT HAVE DIRECT CONTACT WITH NABIH BARRI -- A
RELATIONSHIP THEY WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO ESTABLISH.
KIMCHE TOLD MCFARLANE DURING HIS LAST VISIT THAT THE
EFFORT TO SET UP SHIIA MILITIAS IN THE SOUTH IS NOT
AN EFFORT TO CONFRONT BARRI OR SPLIT THE SHIIA -- BUT
TO FILL A SECURITY VACUUM. THEY WOULD PREFER TO
COORDINATE DIRECTLY WITH BARRI CONCERNING THE SECURITY
PROBLEMS IN SOUTH LEBANON IF HE WERE WILLING.

-- AS WE CONCENTRATE ON THE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION
TRACK, IT MAKES GOOD SENSE FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE TO SEE
WHAT CAN BE DONE ALSO TO PROMOTE THESE VARIOUS

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6587

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

INFO WHITEHOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

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FOR AMBASSADORS EYES ONLY

BEIRUT FOR AMBASSADOR MCFARLANE

RELATIONSHIPS. WE ALREADY HAVE SOME INKLING OF WHAT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE ON THE GOL-DRUZE-ISRAELI TRACK. IF PURSUED AND EXPANDED ON THE SHIIA FRONT, THIS APPROACH COULD CONCEIVABLY REINFORCE OUR LARGER OBJECTIVES IN THE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION TALKS, ASSUMING THAT A NETWORK OF UNDERSTANDINGS -- EVEN SEPARATE DEALS -- CAN BE WORKED OUT BETWEEN GEMAYEL AND JUMBLATT, AND GEMAYEL AND BARRI. ALTERNATIVELY, IF THE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION TALKS DRAW OUT OR COLLAPSE, THIS SUB-STRUCTURE OF RELATIONSHIPS MIGHT POSSIBLY SERVE AS A FORM OF SAFETY NET AND LEAVE GEMAYEL (AND US) LESS EXPOSED.

-- IF SOME SORT OF COMMUNICATION CAN BE DEVELOPED BETWEEN THE ISRAELIS AND BARRI, THIS COULD FACILITATE

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FURTHER ISRAELI PULLBACKS FROM THEIR PRESENT LINES OVER TIME, ESPECIALLY IF IT IS COUPLED WITH THE DEPLOYMENT OF U.S.-TRAINED AND EQUIPPED LAF UNITS INTO ZONES WHICH ARE EVACUATED. THE EVOLVING ISRAELI SECURITY CONCEPT FOR THE SOUTH RESTS ON A TRIPOD OF LOCAL SECURITY FORCES: HADDAD'S MILITIAS LF, AND SHIIA "NATIONAL GUARDS." HOWEVER, KIMCHE STRESSES THAT THE ISRAELIS HOPE TO SEE ALL UNDER AN LAF UMBRELLA AND CLAIMS THAT THERE IS LAF RECEPTIVITY TO THE CONCEPT.

-- A SHIIA-GOI RELATIONSHIP WOULD ALSO INCREASE OUR LEVERAGE WITH THE ISRAELIS TO AVOID THEIR TAKING ACTIONS WHICH WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF TRANSPLANTING WEST BANK PRACTICES TO SOUTHERN LEBANON IN INCREMENTAL PHASES. OUR LINE OF ARGUMENT THAT LEBANESE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATIVE AND MILITARY ELEMENTS MUST BE DEVELOPED AND STRENGTHENED -- EVEN IF THE TRADE-OFF IS A LESSENING OF ISRAELI CONTROL AND CULTIVATION OF MORE ISRAELI SURROGATES IN THE SOUTH -- WILL BE SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCED IF THE ISRAELIS HAVE SOME SORT OF CONFIDENCE IN SHIIA NATIONAL LEADERSHIP, ESPECIALLY THE AMAL.

-- THIS IS ADMITTEDLY A TRICKY ROAD TO TRAVERSE, AND PLAYING THE ISRAELI CARD WILL REQUIRE SUBTLETY AND SKILL. WE CANNOT AFFORD TO BE TOO PUBLICLY EMBRACED WITH THE ISRAELIS. HOWEVER, THEY CAN INFLUENCE THE MARONITES AND THEY HAVE LINES OPEN TO JUMBLATT. WE NEED TO CHANNEL THEIR ENERGIES CONSTRUCTIVELY ON THESE FRONTS, AS WELL AS WITH THE SHIIAS. THIS WILL REQUIRE CONSTANT CONSULTATION AND, AT TIMES, EFFECTIVE COOPERATION.

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LINKAGE WITH THE PEACE PROCESS

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5. THE CURRENT DRAMA SURROUNDING THE PLO IN LEBANON MAY OFFER NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR THE BROADER PEACE PROCESS. UNTIL WE HAVE A CLEARER PICTURE OF HOW EVENTS ON THE GROUND WILL UNFOLD, HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD REFRAIN FROM UNDERTAKING NEW INITIATIVES ON THIS FRONT. THE PERCEIVED DIRECT LINKAGE LAST YEAR BETWEEN THE PLO EVACUATION FROM WEST BEIRUT AND THE REAGAN INITIATIVE ACCOUNTED, IN PART, FOR THE GOI'S SHARP REJECTION OF THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSALS. WE COULD EXPECT A SIMILAR GOI REACTION NOW IF THE UNITED STATES WERE SEEN TO BE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF ARAFAT'S CURRENT DILEMMA TO AGAIN RESCUE HIM POLITICALLY AND ATTEMPT TO PROMOTE A NEW PLO/HUSSEIN UNDERSTANDING.

ISRAELI DOMESTIC POLITICS AS A FACTOR

6. UNDER THE RIGHT CONDITIONS, U.S. PEACE PROCESS POLICY CAN EXPLOIT DIVISIONS WITHIN ISRAELI SOCIETY TO FURTHER OUR AIMS. THIS COULD HAVE OCCURRED HAD KING HUSSEIN MADE THE KIND OF DRAMATIC COMMITMENT TO NEGOTIATE WHICH WE COULD HAVE EXPLOITED IN ISRAEL TO INDUCE A RELUCTANT GOVERNMENT TO NEGOTIATE. UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS, HOWEVER, AND WITH THE BACKGROUND OF HUSSEIN'S REFUSAL TO NEGOTIATE, ALMOST ANY U.S. INITIATIVE ON THIS FRONT -- WHILE THE LEBANON IMBROGLIO REMAINS UNRESOLVED -- COULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF STRENGTHENING AN OTHERWISE WEAK SHAMIR GOVERNMENT, WITH PEOPLE RALLYING AROUND HIM TO COUNTERACT U.S. PRESSURE. THE SHAMIR GOVERNMENT WILL ARGUE THAT U.S. CREDIBILITY VIS-A-VIS ARAB COMMITMENTS IS WEAK.

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WITNESS SYRIA'S REFUSAL TO WITHDRAW, EGYPT'S REVERSAL ON THE RETURN OF ITS AMBASSADOR, AND JORDAN'S DECISION NOT TO NEGOTIATE -- ALL OF THESE FOLLOWING ALLEGED "COMMITMENTS" MADE TO THE U.S. ACCORDINGLY, WE WOULD BE BETTER ADVISED TO REGISTER A SUCCESS IN LEBANON BEFORE EMBARKING ON AN INITIATIVE WHOSE OUTCOME IS FAR FROM CERTAIN AND WHOSE DYNAMICS COULD STRENGTHEN THE OPPONENTS OF PEACE PROCESS PROGRESS.

7. BEIRUT MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. LEWIS